

Beverley Allinson
Judith Lawrence

Let's Take a Vote
Women at Work



CURRICULUM

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NO. 4

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Women at Work
Take One
Ready for Take-Off
Open Wide
Let's Take a Vote

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"Tell me again, Mom," said Naomi. "What is it you want to be?"

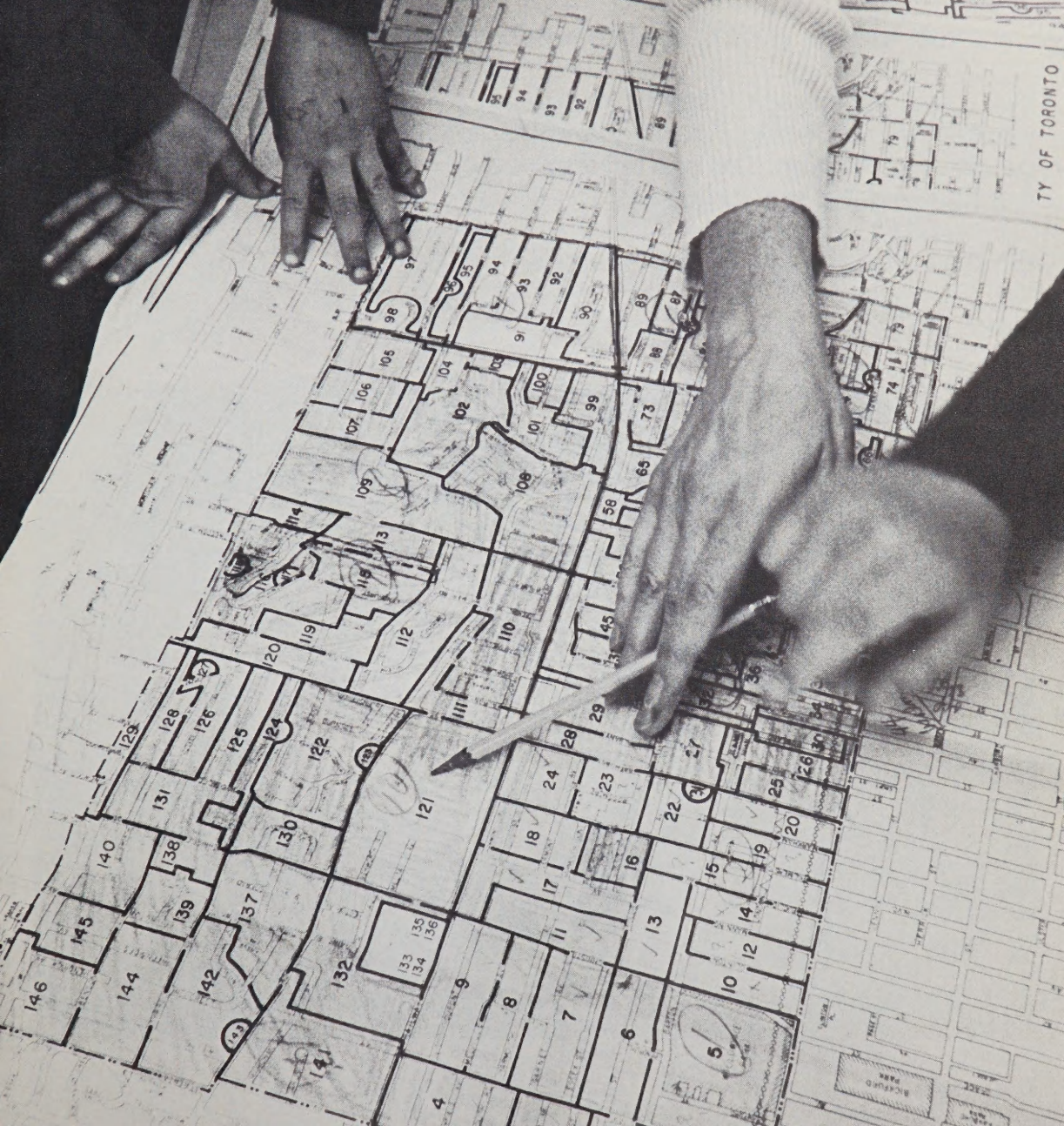
Judith smiled. "I want to be a politician," she said. "I'm running for election as a school trustee."



Judith and her family were planning her campaign. They sat around the table looking at a map that showed where all the voters lived. This was important because if she was to be elected, Judith had to reach as many people as possible and convince them to vote for her.

Everyone in Judith's family wanted to help.





"Can I vote for you, Mom?" asked Naomi.

"You're not old enough," Judith laughed. "But you can help by letting people know I'm running for election. You can tell them why I would be a good school trustee."

"What will I tell them?" Naomi wanted to know.



"It's all written here in Mom's leaflet," said Becky.

"I'll put leaflets in all the mail boxes on Green Street," said Rachel. "You can help me, Naomi."



Judith Major was born in Montreal and has lived in South America, the United States, Halifax, Nova Scotia and for seventeen years in Toronto. She is a Ward 5 home-owner, taxpayer and parent whose four children attend public schools. She has served on the executive of the Rathnely Ratepayers' Association and was chairman of the Brown School Home & School Association during a period that saw the most dramatic changes in the school's sixty-odd years of existence, many of them brought about as a result of her energetic involvement and leadership in local education issues. In 1972 she was a candidate in Ward 5 and came within seven votes of victory. Since then she's been active on various sub-committees of the Board and is a member of the regional council of the Ontario Educational Communications Authority. Her husband is Leon Major.

Judith Major believes:

- Above all, that education should be a three-way partnership between parent, teacher and child.
- That the Board of Education should be an active agency in promoting this partnership.
- That children from their first day in junior kindergarten should have their minds stretched and their imaginations enriched by the school experience.
- That once children achieve secondary school, they should be able to continue in a flexible atmosphere and not be thrust back into the rigidity of rote learning.
- That teachers should not be forced to work in an atmosphere where they have too many pupils and too little time for thinking and planning.
- That the school should be a centre of a community's life, where people of all ages are welcomed and the community's special needs are understood and heeded.
- That the trustee must be accountable and accessible to her constituents on a regular basis throughout her term in office for free discussions of education issues and individual problems.

Make the Major Decision

on December 2nd/1974
For more information call 964-1113

Judith Major is alert, perceptive, concerned, funny, enthusiastic, gutsy, honourable, guileless and smart. She is just a great candidate.
JUNE CALLWOOD.

For a long time, Judith Major has been our articulate and hard-working... but unofficial spokesman, presenting our views as parents in Ward 5 to the Board of Education. Now we want to make it official by electing her trustee.
SHIRLEY MORRIS.

Judith Major is lively proof that parental involvement in the school is a positive force.
JACK GRANATSTEIN.

Judith Major is one of those rare individuals who combine integrity with charm, vitality with intelligence and compassionate commitment with respect for other people's opinions. She would make a hell of a good trustee for Ward 5.
PETER C. NEWMAN.

"The roles of the student, the teacher, the parent and the taxpayer — she knows them all. An intense and conscientious worker, a warm and sensitive person, Judith Major would make an excellent trustee."
DIANE ROTSTEIN.

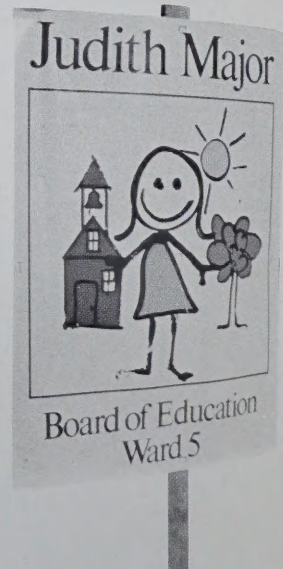
"We need reform-minded people in our Government to help keep Toronto the great city it is and Judith Major is exactly the kind of person who should be on the Board of Education."
ALDERMAN WILLIAM KILBOURN.

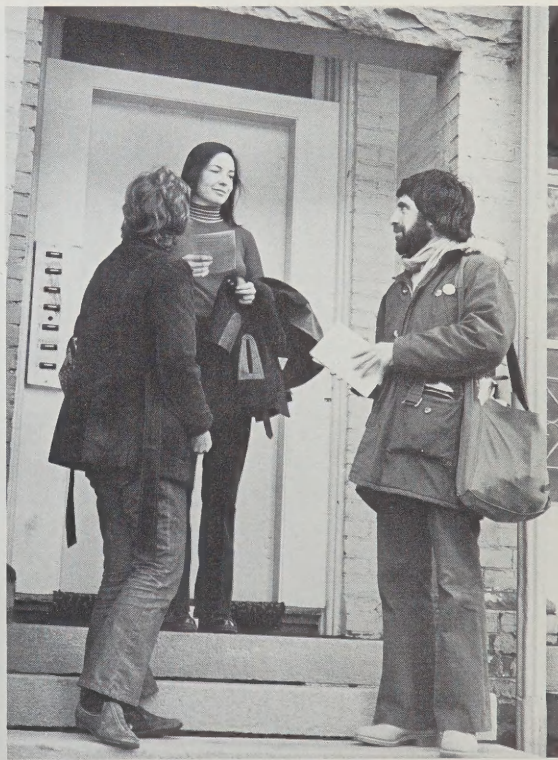
Judith also let people know she wanted their vote by putting up signs. Her sign told them at a glance that she was interested in schools and education.

“Have the signs gone up here, Leon?” Judith asked, pointing to a street on the map.

“Not yet,” her husband replied. “That’s what Josh and I will be doing this afternoon. Six teams of helpers are working this morning as well, so that by the end of the day all the signs should be in place.”

“That’s great news,” said Judith. “While you’re all doing your jobs, I’ll go from door to door introducing myself to the voters.”



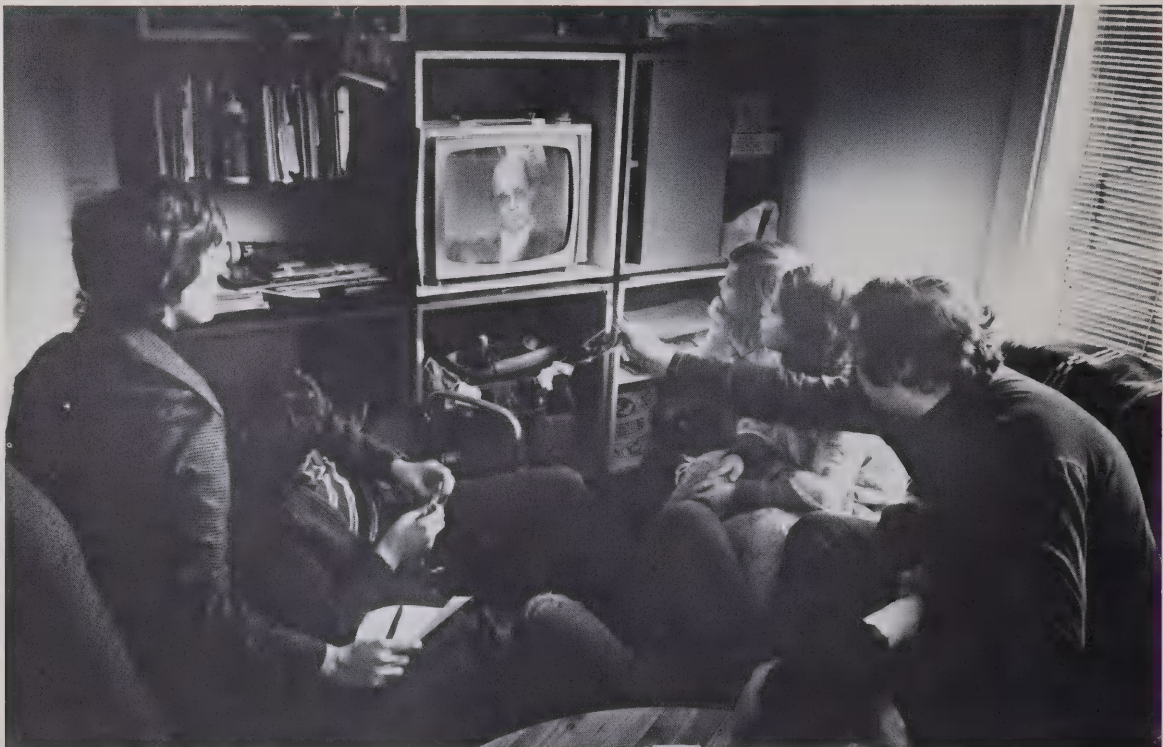




For weeks before the election, Judith talked to people — on the street, in their homes, and at meetings.

Most people who agreed to support her also agreed to have one of her signs put in front of their homes. Then Judith's children or her helpers would hammer a stake into the ground and staple a sign into place.





On the day of the election, Judith went to the polling station to vote. There she was given a ballot, a long piece of paper with her name and the names of all the other candidates on it. Beside each name was a circle. Judith made an X in the circle beside the candidate she had chosen. Then she folded the sheet and put it into a slot in the top of the ballot box.

In hundreds of polling stations that day, thousands of voters were choosing their candidates. They were voting for mayors and council members as well as school trustees.

At the end of the day, the polling stations closed and the counting of votes began.

Judith sat with her family in front of the television, waiting for the results to be announced. She was tense and excited, wondering if she had won or lost.

At last she knew the people wanted her as trustee. She had won by one thousand votes!

Now that she was a member of the Board of Education, Judith had to attend many meetings, where she spoke for the people living in her area.



The schools she represented had a large number of children from other countries. Judith was able to join a committee of trustees from similar schools.

The committee decided to report to the Board on the needs of the immigrant children in their areas.



PUBLIC SCHOOL JUNIOR



Judith visited the principal of Hillcrest School to find out what was being done there.

“We have English classes for children who have just arrived in this country,” he said. “We find that newcomers quickly learn the language, especially while playing with their friends in the school yard. We also have teachers from other countries on our staff.”

“That’s an idea I would like to introduce into other schools,” said Judith. “It’s important that teachers understand the backgrounds of the children they teach.”

Later, when she talked with the teachers, Judith heard how one class had held an international festival. Children from Greece, Italy, Portugal, Jamaica, India, Japan and other countries had prepared and brought to school the kinds of food they ate at home.

“I remember how excited my daughter Rachel was that week,” Judith told the teachers. “She had no idea that the children she played with each day ate such interesting food.”



At recess, the principal introduced Judith to some of the students. She enjoyed hearing them talk about the games they played.

“Children seem to play in the same sorts of ways wherever they are,” she commented.
“Only the names of the games change from one country to another.”

“Hey, Mom!”

“Hi, Mom!” came two voices from the back of the crowd. Rachel and Naomi weren’t surprised to see their mother at school. She’d been there lots of times, first as a parent and now as a politician.



After she had visited many schools, Judith worked on her report in her office. She had found out a lot about immigrant children.

Often they spoke another language at home. Sometimes they were the only members of their families who could speak English. When the family went shopping, these children helped their parents by translating for them.







In her report, Judith wrote that schools should help children learn more about the different people living in their community. Having international festivals was one good way of doing this. She had seen how much children enjoyed sharing each other's language and customs.

Judith finished her report, picked up the phone and dialed a number.

“Hello, Josh? Could you and Becky cook dinner tonight? I have to chair a meeting. Your Dad should be home at the usual time and he can help you. Thanks, Josh. I'll be there just after seven.”



Judith called the meeting to order.

Every year the Board paid groups of dancers, actors, puppeteers and musicians to perform for the children, and this committee was meeting to decide which groups would be hired.

The committee agreed to give money to all the groups who had performed last year.



However, two new groups had applied to the Board and there was only enough money for one.

“I think we should have the mime troupe visit the schools,” one committee member said.

“I’d rather spend the money on the new theatre group,” said another.



“We’ll take a vote,” said Judith. “All those in favour of using the money to hire the mime troupe, raise your hands.”

Several hands went up around the table. Judith counted them.

“That’s six in favour of the mime troupe,” she announced. “Those in favour of the theatre group?”

Again the hands were raised and again she counted.

“Six,” said Judith. “We have a tie vote. So I guess it’s up to me to make a decision. Might I suggest we divide the money between the two groups?”

“I think that’s the fairest way to do it,” said one of the committee members.

Everyone nodded in agreement.

“Let’s put it to the vote,” said Judith.

This time all were in favour.



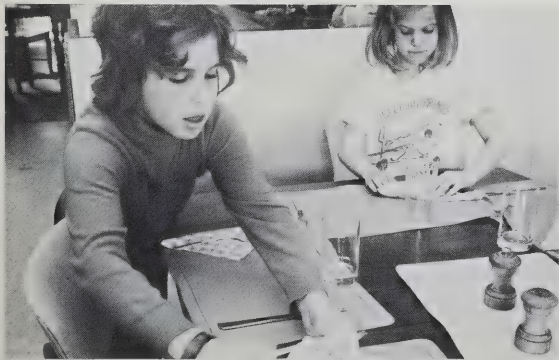


When she got home, Judith found Josh and Becky in the kitchen cooking the meal. Rachel and Naomi were setting the table, and Leon had prepared a salad.

“I’m certainly glad we can all share the housework,” said Judith. “It’s marvellous to come home to a dinner that smells so delicious.”

The cooks grinned.

“Wait till you taste it before you compliment them,” joked Leon.



During the meal, which was delicious, the family talked about their summer vacation.

“A cottage in the country,” said Leon, “away from everything. That’s my idea of a holiday.”

“Camping,” said Rachel.

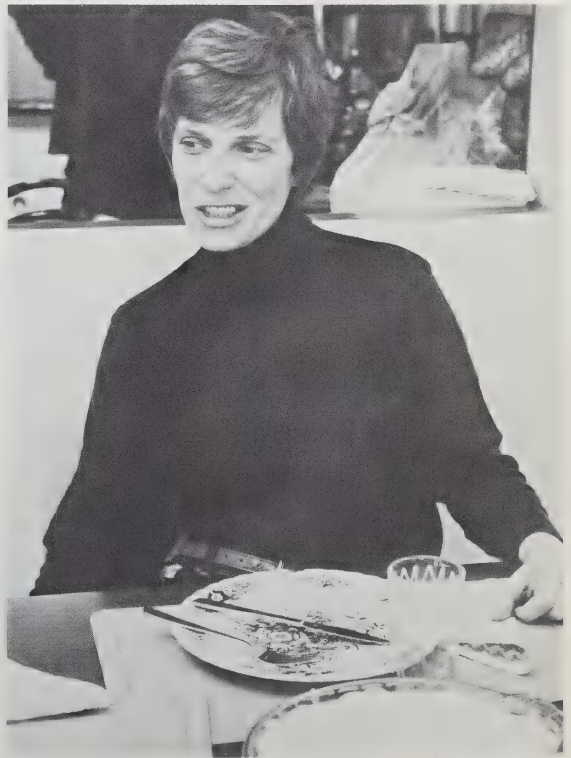
“Camping,” said Josh.



“Camping,” said Becky.

“Camping,” said Naomi.

“Oh, no!” said Judith.



The conversation lasted into the evening. Before it was over, the living room table was covered with maps and everyone had had a chance to speak. But only one person had changed his mind.

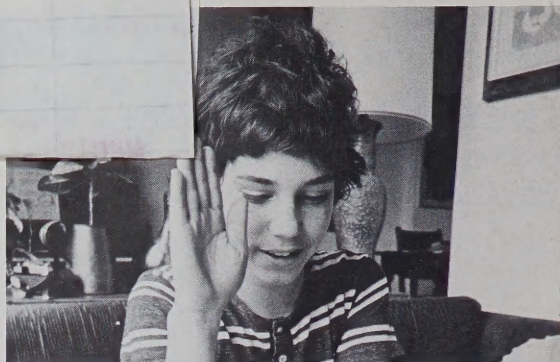
“Camping is so much work,” said Judith.
“I want to lie in the sun and relax.”



"You can, Mom," said Josh. "We'll all share the work the way we do here."

"Let's take a vote," said Becky, smiling at her mother. "All those in favour of camping, raise your hands."





Acknowledgements

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Leon Major

Rachel Major

Josh Major

Rebecca Major

Naomi Major

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